



Department
for Education

School accountability reform – school profiles, improvement and intervention

Government consultation response

September 2025

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Introduction

Every child and young person in England should have the opportunity to succeed, no matter their background, their circumstances, or the neighbourhood in which they live. This requires an accountability system for schools that sets clear expectations, facilitates improvement, and spreads excellence.

We have already taken steps to deliver a system which better serves all pupils. In September 2024, we announced the immediate removal of Ofsted single headline grades for all areas it inspects. These were low information for parents and high stakes for teachers and school staff.

We have also strengthened our tools to facilitate faster and more effective school improvement. While we will continue to transfer failing schools to strong trusts, we have also launched new Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) teams, supported by over £20m in FY2025-26. RISE teams are working with responsible bodies to design bespoke, targeted interventions to drive improvements. This is allowing us to intervene to deliver more rapid improvements in schools that need additional support.

As well as providing both mandatory and targeted intervention for schools found by Ofsted as needing to improve, RISE will provide a universal service, acting as a catalyst for a self-improving system for all schools. The four national priorities for the universal RISE service include attainment; pupil attendance; reception year quality; and supporting more inclusive mainstream education.

Further reform now is needed to improve confidence and ensure school accountability arrangements contribute effectively to high and rising standards for all our children.

This consultation

Our consultation set out proposals on:

Chapter 1 set out our overall approach to improving school accountability and proposed some principles to guide accountability reform in England.

Chapter 2 covered our future vision for school profiles, which we proposed will incorporate Ofsted's school report cards and a range of other information to provide a one-stop shop of information about schools.

Chapter 3 set out how we proposed to ensure all schools improve, intervening (including structurally) where necessary, and ensuring our new Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) teams support and challenge schools to deliver high and rising standards for all children.

The consultation ran from 3 February to 28 April 2025. In addition to taking written submissions, we also carried out an exploratory phase of digital development into school

profiles and carried out stakeholder engagement with parents, unions, and representative bodies.

This document sets out a summary of the views from the consultation, and the Government's response. All responses were read and analysed by officials at the Department for Education. Figures provided in this document have been rounded to the nearest whole number, which in places might result in totals being slightly different from the sum of their parts.

As is becoming more common across government; to improve efficiency, the free-text responses were analysed with assistance from artificial intelligence (AI). A team of data science professionals fully validated this. For each of the 16 free-text boxes (from Q12 onwards), we used an iterative and zero-shot prompting approach with Azure OpenAI's GPT-4o Large Language Model (LLM), to summarise the responses into the most frequently occurring topics and produce a description of each topic. Zero-shot prompting means the model requires no prior knowledge of the subject area; we iterated on this to optimise the output. The model prioritised and ranked topics based on how frequently they appeared in the responses. Access to this LLM was provided through Microsoft's Azure OpenAI Service, which does not share data with third parties, and the LLM was accessed through DfE computers.

A team of data science professionals validated every AI-generated topic to check that the output was genuinely reflective of the survey responses. They also carried out quality assurance on the topic rankings to ensure they accurately reflected the content and emphasis of the consultation responses. Alongside the AI analysis, a team of policy professionals read and themed, at a high level, all responses. Once the AI-generated output was complete, policy professionals conducted a validation step by comparing the themes from the AI-generated output with those that had been manually identified. This cross-check helped confirm the relevance and accuracy of the themes and ensured that key insights were not overlooked.

Ofsted consultation

In parallel, Ofsted consulted on their proposals to improve education inspections and their new report cards for providers. The proposals covered early years (not childminder agencies or those on the childcare register), state-funded schools, non-association independent schools, further education and skills (FES) and initial teacher education (ITE) providers. It is publishing its response alongside this response.

Summary of responses received and the Government's response

The consultation received 859 responses via the Citizen Space portal and 11 responses by email (5 from individuals and 6 from organisations).

Respondents were asked in what capacity they were responding to the consultation. For those who responded via Citizen Space 73% of responses were responding as an individual with 27% responding on behalf of an organisation.

The table below shows the breakdown of individual respondent type for those who were responding as an individual via Citizen Space. The breakdown by organisation is on the next page.

Individuals by Respondent Group	Total	Percent
Student, pupil or learner	2	0%
Parent or carer	187	30%
Teacher, tutor or lecturer	311	50%
Researcher, academic or education expert	46	7%
Governor	62	10%
Other member of the public	20	3%

Table 1: overview of individual consultation respondents

The below table shows the breakdown of organisation respondent type for those responding on behalf of an organisation via Citizen Space.

Organisations by Respondent Group	Total	Percent
Maintained primary school	38	16%
Primary academy	18	8%
Maintained secondary or sixth form	8	3%
Secondary academy	18	8%
16-19 academy	1	0%
Maintained special school or alternative provision academy	1	0%
Special or alternative provision academy	4	2%
Other maintained school e.g. middle school or boarding school	1	0%
Other academy school	-	-
Independent school	-	-
Academy trust	38	16%
Sixth form college	1	0%
General further education colleges (including designated institutions)	-	-
Special post 16 institutions	-	-
Local authority provider	2	1%
Independent training provider	2	1%
Childminder	-	-
Maintained nursery school	1	0%
Private, voluntary or independent early years group setting	2	1%
Representative organisation or trade association	18	8%
Local authority	22	10%
Government organisation/agency	-	-
Other (please specify)	48	21%
Not answered	8	3%

Table 2: Overview of organisation consultation responses

Summary of Government's response

We are grateful to everyone who responded to the consultation for sharing their views. After careful consideration of consultation responses, the Department for Education will make some refinements before proceeding with implementing all of the proposals consulted on.

Chapter 1: Accountability in the state-funded school system

We will proceed with our proposal to deliver improvements based on the principles for school system accountability arrangements, with refinement to the first principle to emphasise inclusion.

Chapter 2: School Profiles

The Department will move forward with developing digital school profiles to provide parents and the public with clear, reliable information across a range of school performance indicators.

Sector feedback highlighted the value of using data to support collaboration and improvement. To address this, a separate digital school improvement service for schools will be developed to help them benchmark, share best practice and work together. A pilot version will be tested in the 2025/26 academic year, before launching publicly in 2026/27.

This dual approach aims to support both parental choice and system-wide school improvement.

Chapter 3: Intervention

Intervention in schools that require special measures

The government will proceed with making structural intervention the default approach for schools found by Ofsted to require special measures as these schools will have been found not to have the capacity to improve under their current management.

Intervention in schools that require significant improvement

The government will proceed with its proposal for schools requiring significant improvement to normally undergo structural intervention until September 2026, while RISE teams build capacity. From September 2026, targeted RISE intervention will become the default, with structural intervention applied if schools have not secured improvement across all Ofsted inspection areas after 18 months. These changes depend on the passage of the *Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill*, and updated regulations will ensure schools with ongoing concerns remain eligible for intervention.

Intervention in ‘stuck schools’

The government will proceed with updating the definition of ‘stuck’ to include those rated ‘needs attention’ in leadership and governance and previously graded below ‘good’. Targeted RISE intervention will be offered as a bespoke, collaborative improvement approach. Schools which are ‘stuck’ will have two years to achieve ‘expected standard’ ratings in all areas, after which structural intervention will be the default if sufficient progress hasn’t been made.

Using a combination of structural and RISE mandatory interventions, we will drive improvement activity, with on average around twice as many mandatory interventions as were covered in the two years prior to the policy change.¹

Other schools eligible for targeted RISE intervention

The government will move forward with its proposal for RISE teams to engage with small numbers of schools, via their responsible bodies, where pupil attainment is a significant concern. From autumn 2025, RISE teams will undertake informal engagement with schools that have concerning attainment to understand more about their performance and provide opportunities for them to learn from other schools. In addition, we will consult this autumn on further options for using the RISE service to address low attainment.

Impact

The government is committed to designing a reformed accountability system that delivers high standards for all pupils while being proportionate and mindful of teacher workload and wellbeing. Our consultation response takes account of recommendations made to government in the independent report commissioned by Ofsted on the workload and wellbeing implications of its reforms.

School profiles will undergo user testing to ensure they do not create undue burden. The role of RISE teams will be supportive and context-sensitive, with a focus on early intervention and collaboration to enable early improvement within existing school structures.

We are publishing an Equality Impact Assessment which records the analysis undertaken by the Department for Education to enable Ministers to fulfil the requirements placed on them by the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

¹ This is the yearly average of the number of schools that received mandatory structural intervention in the last two years before the change in policy compared to the average annual number of schools we estimate will receive mandatory intervention, through both structural and targeted RISE intervention, over the next three years.

Ofsted's consultation

Ofsted has carefully considered responses to its consultation. As set out in its consultation response, key features of the renewed inspection framework will include:

- **Report cards:** these will give parents, carers, employers and professionals more detailed and granular information than the current reports, including a new 5-point grading scale to evaluate key areas of a provider's work and short summaries of what inspectors found. Alongside the inspection report card, Ofsted will also publish data that informed the evaluation grade to illustrate the provider and learner contexts.
- **Education inspection toolkits:** these will show providers and inspectors the evaluation areas that inspections will focus on and how Ofsted will assess and grade providers.
- **A new inspection methodology:** which will emphasise inspection as a collaborative process between inspectors and professionals and is designed to improve the quality and consistency of inspections.
- **Full inspections and monitoring inspections, state-funded schools:** Ofsted will end ungraded inspections of state-funded schools and introduce more flexible monitoring programmes to check that timely action is taken to raise standards, and to reflect improvement in the report card.
- **Identifying state-funded schools causing concern:** Ofsted has detailed its approach to how it places a school into a category of concern.

Main findings from the consultation

This document details the reasoning behind each of the decisions made, following analysis of the responses to the consultation.

Chapter 1: Accountability in the state-funded school system

Effective school accountability – purpose and principles

We proposed to deliver improvements based on the principles that school system accountability arrangements must:

- drive high and rising standards, supporting all children and young people to achieve and thrive;
- provide assurance to parents, giving them clear, transparent and reliable information to inform choices, recognising the breadth of what a school does across a range of criteria, including achievement and attendance;
- give school leaders, staff and responsible bodies granular insights with sufficient detail about the quality of different elements to help all schools move forward towards excellence;
- encourage collaboration through the system so that providers work together for the benefit of all children, young people and learners, drawing on excellence and identifying areas for improvement, creating a truly self-improving system;
- be delivered consistently, transparently and to the highest professional standards, with arrangements that are fair and credible, recognising limitations in data, taking appropriate account of context while maintaining high expectations for all children and young people, and only holding schools to account for those things they can control;
- be proportionate, taking account of the impact on workload and the wellbeing of leaders, teachers and staff;
- be coherent with clear and distinct roles and responsibilities for different actors in the system; and
- have an emphasis on identifying those providers in need of additional help so that tailored and proportionate intervention can be provided at the right time, including taking action to change the organisation that governs a school where it is necessary to bring about improvement.

Together, the proposals within the Department's and Ofsted's linked consultations are intended to deliver improvements that are consistent with these principles.

We asked

- Do you agree that these are useful principles for delivering improvements to school accountability?
- Are there any other principles that we should consider?

We heard

73% of respondents agreed that the principles were helpful in improving school accountability. Teachers and school leaders especially appreciated the recognition of school context, as well as the emphasis on staff workload, wellbeing, and collaboration. Parents highlighted the importance of clearly including accountability for inclusive practices, particularly for children with SEND.

Government response

We welcome the broad support for the proposed principles, and as a result, we believe these provide a strong basis on which to continue to build improvements to our accountability arrangements.

Some respondents highlighted the importance of inclusion. Through our Opportunity Mission, the government is committed to breaking the link between young people's background and their chance of success. Every child and young person should have every opportunity to succeed, no matter who they are, where they come from, or how much their parents earn. To emphasise this, we have amended our first principle to ensure that a broader definition of inclusion runs throughout our accountability reforms. Ofsted is also introducing inclusion as a standalone inspection evaluation area in its renewed framework.

Therefore, our reforms to school accountability arrangements will be based on the following principles:

Changes from the consultation text are marked in bold.

- drive high and rising standards, supporting all children and young people, **regardless of their circumstances**, to achieve and thrive,
- provide assurance to parents, giving them clear, transparent and reliable information to inform choices, recognising the breadth of what a school does across a range of criteria, including achievement and attendance;
- give school leaders, staff and responsible bodies granular insights with sufficient detail about the quality of different elements to help all schools move forward towards excellence;

- encourage collaboration through the system so that providers work together for the benefit of all children, young people and learners, drawing on excellence and identifying areas for improvement, creating a truly self-improving system;
- be delivered consistently, transparently and to the highest professional standards, with arrangements that are fair and credible, recognising limitations in data, taking appropriate account of context while maintaining high expectations for all children and young people, and only holding schools to account for those things they can control;
- be proportionate, taking account of the impact on workload and the wellbeing of leaders, teachers and staff,
- be coherent with clear and distinct roles and responsibilities for different actors in the system; and
- have an emphasis on identifying those providers in need of additional help so that tailored and proportionate intervention can be provided at the right time, including taking action to change the organisation that governs a school where it is necessary to bring about improvement.

Roles and responsibilities in accountability for state-funded schools

One of the principles for school accountability is defining clear and distinct roles and responsibilities for the different actors in the school system. While we did not ask a specific question on this, some respondents requested greater clarity on the role of school profiles in accountability, and the roles of RISE teams and responsible bodies in school improvement.

RISE is the main school improvement programme, which has been set up to provide bespoke, tailored support and facilitate collaboration for schools. There are two parts to the programme:

- Targeted Intervention
- Universal RISE

Both elements of the programme are delivered by RISE teams, which include expert RISE advisers; proven leaders with a track record of improving schools, who work with schools and their responsible bodies to drive improvement. Advisers oversee targeted RISE intervention by working collaboratively with a school to define a school improvement plan and develop a package of support. Examples of support could include staff CPD, mentoring, or developing strategies for pupil attendance.

Universal RISE will help to ensure that all schools, no matter where they fall on the performance spectrum, are able to navigate a pathway to improvement. To drive up standards, RISE teams will work with all schools to signpost them to the most effective

practice, including DfE hubs of excellent practice in areas like Maths, English, attendance and behaviour; encourage peer-to peer support; and bring schools together to share their knowledge and innovation. At the core of this framework sits the responsible body for each school; the trust for an academy, and the governing body and local authority for a maintained school, which are accountable for the schools they run, and within that the achievement and welfare of the pupils they teach. Diocesan boards also have statutory functions with respect to the faith schools that they oversee. This remains the case through mandatory targeted RISE intervention.

As set out in our consultation, the second key part of the accountability framework is the Department for Education which acts as the steward and regulator for the school system. This role is primarily carried out by the Department's Regions Group on behalf of the Secretary of State. Their responsibilities include supporting schools to deliver high-quality education for all pupils and intervening where necessary when standards fall short. For maintained schools, this role is shared with local authorities.

The Department currently has a duty to convert underperforming maintained schools into academies, known as structural intervention. However, through the *Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill*, the Department is seeking to change this duty into a power, enabling RISE teams to intervene in schools that need to improve but have been found by Ofsted to have the capacity to do so, or while structural changes are pending.

Ofsted forms the third part of the framework, conducting independent inspections of all state-funded schools in England. In the future, Ofsted will report through a new school report card, which will highlight both strengths and areas for improvement as part of a broader assessment of school quality.

These report cards will inform the Department's decision (as the regulator) on whether to take improvement action, through RISE intervention or structural intervention. Where appropriate, Ofsted will provide external evaluation of the improvement journey through its monitoring processes to ensure sufficient progress is being made where needed.

Over time, school report cards will be integrated into school profiles, combining with various data collected and published by the Department. This will enhance transparency and help families make informed choices about schools.

An updated visual description at Annex A sets out an overview of accountability roles, including the role of school profiles.

Chapter 2: School profiles

In the consultation, we proposed to introduce a new digital service, operated by the Department, which would:

- include the information from Ofsted's new school report cards;
- be regularly updated with the Department's most recent school performance data. This would include more up-to-date data, currently in the Department's existing Compare School and College Performance² website about how a school is performing against key performance metrics (e.g. the attainment and progress of a school's pupils at KS2, KS4 and 16-18), alongside Ofsted's point-in-time reporting. We proposed to explore if it is helpful to allow easy comparisons, including between schools with similar characteristics, or in similar areas; and
- include other useful information from a variety of different sources. This could, for example, include information from schools themselves or the Department's other data collections such as the School Census.

We asked

- Do you agree a school profile should be the place users can see the most recent performance information, where it is available?
- Is there other information published by the Department that you would like to see in a school profile in future?
- Are there other pieces of information that you might expect or want to routinely see in a school profile?
- Do you have any further comments on our proposal for a new school profile service operated by the Department?

Alongside the consultation, the Department conducted the first exploratory phase of digital development looking at how digital services might contribute to driving high and rising standards in schools through the lens of school performance and accountability data. The research included in-depth interviews with parents and school professionals to understand their needs in more detail.

² [Search for schools, colleges and multi-academy trusts - Compare school and college performance data in England - GOV.UK](#)

The team also analysed historic user research from Compare School and College Performance (CSCP)³, carried out desk research, and assessed similar digital services that have been developed at local level.

We heard

The majority of consultation respondents (77%) thought that school profiles should be the place where they can find up to date performance information.

We received a wide variety of suggestions about other information that could be included in a school profile. Respondents wanted to know about the broader context of a school and pupil characteristics along with performance measures. There was a concern that if this was not provided, data may be misinterpreted or could mislead users. Through our stakeholder engagement, user research, and from some consultation responses, we heard a range of concerns regarding the publication of some of this data. Concerns included that some parents might choose to avoid schools with certain pupil characteristics, and this could reduce the diversity of intakes in certain schools.

As well as context about the pupils at the school, some teachers and some parents also thought the socio-economic context of the school's community was important to understand performance information.

Parents and other respondents expressed a desire for a more rounded view of schools, including ethos, values, curriculum, and other school policies. This view was echoed by unions, faith groups, and leadership bodies, highlighting its broad support. This also came through particularly strongly in our user research, which indicated that parents may value factors such as extracurricular activities, pastoral care, and leadership often more than performance data.

In answer to the question on school profiles and on potential equalities implications, inclusion has been highlighted as an issue in which respondents are particularly interested. Some respondents want school profiles to reflect how well schools serve all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Other respondents warned against perverse incentives and added that schools with a strong SEND offer might be overwhelmed with parental demand, and this could reinforce polarisation.

³ [Search for schools, colleges and multi-academy trusts - Compare school and college performance data in England - GOV.UK](#)

Respondents, including organisations representing teachers and leaders, expressed concern about the workload implications of school profiles for school staff if they are required to provide additional detailed information for a profile.

While no specific questions were posed, unions and sector representatives emphasised the need for greater clarity regarding the role of school profiles within the accountability framework. This is described below and set out in the diagram at Annex A.

Government response

We welcome the support across respondent groups for making the school profile the place users can see the most recent performance information. We are grateful to respondents for the considerable range of suggestions about other information that should form part of the school profile in the future.

We currently publish information about schools in Compare School and College Performance and Analyse School Performance. In our consultation we said, and 77% of respondents agreed, that there is an opportunity to go further. Based on the strength of the support, we will proceed with our proposal to develop school profiles as a digital service. A pilot version will be tested in the 2025/26 academic year, with the aim for the service to be launched publicly in 2026/27.

School profiles will be a key part of the school accountability system that works for parents - giving them clear, transparent and reliable information to inform choices while holding schools to account on a range of published performance measures, just as Compare School and College Performance currently does. This is important for providing transparency on the education being delivered by schools to support the aims of the Opportunity Mission for every child to achieve and thrive.

The Department's most recent school performance data, closely integrated with Ofsted's point-in-time report card, will form the fundamental features of a school profile aiming to help parents make decisions about schools based on current standards and to support understanding of Ofsted grades in context.

New school profiles will provide additional information to parents, recognising the breadth of what a school does across a range of criteria, including achievement and attendance. Through user research, we will investigate how information like provision for pupil well-being and a school's enrichment offer can be included within school profiles. We will also explore ways to demonstrate a school's inclusivity within their local communities.

Feedback to our consultation from the school sector also highlighted the potential for better data use to foster school collaboration and improvement. To respond to this, a separate digital service will be developed and designed for use by schools to provide data insights into their performance data. The service, accessible through a sign-in, will allow schools to benchmark and compare their performance against similar schools

enabling more data-driven self-improvement. The service will also facilitate the sharing of best practice, collaboration, and connections with higher-performing schools providing schools with access to high quality best practice and support.

We also think it is important for there to be coverage of 16-18 institutions as many young people will carry on their 16-18 education in schools or colleges. We will therefore also undertake further research in 2025/26 to explore how best to introduce similar profiles for 16-18 institutions, which will include further education colleges.

Through the questions asked about the impact of our proposals, we have heard concerns about the potential impact that school profiles may have on pupils and staff with protected characteristics. These concerns included the risk of lower expectations for certain groups of pupils, or the possibility of schools avoiding the admission of those who may not achieve as well as others in performance measures. We will rigorously test and develop school profiles so that they drive high and rising standards for all children and young people, regardless of their background. Our Equality Impact Assessment addresses these concerns in more detail.

We also heard concerns about teacher workload and wellbeing, primarily regarding the possibility of schools being required to input data into school profiles themselves. Through our user testing and ongoing development, we will take account of the impact on workload and the wellbeing of leaders, teachers and staff. We will assess whether there would be any data entry requirements on schools and, if so, how this could be done in a proportionate way.

Next steps

We plan to pilot both services during the 2025/26 academic year, allowing for ongoing user testing with parents and school leaders. Insights will inform ongoing iteration of design concepts, allowing us to refine functionality and user experience across both platforms. We expect both services to be launched publicly in the 2026/27 academic year.

As school profiles and the sector digital service will carry out the functions of Compare School and College Performance and Analyse School Performance and more, our intention is both legacy services will be discontinued, but only once the new services are implemented to a sufficient standard.

Chapter 3: Intervention

In the consultation, we proposed a more effective and accelerated approach to school improvement, ensuring timely, proportionate intervention where needed so that all pupils can access the high-quality education they deserve.

Our proposals would mean that in the future:

- a school found by Ofsted to require special measures will continue, by default, to receive structural intervention. A maintained school will become an academy, and an existing academy will be transferred to a new trust;
- a school found to require significant improvement will also continue by default to receive structural intervention. From September 2026, we propose a different approach whereby the school will receive mandatory targeted intervention from a RISE team. Ofsted will monitor regularly and inspect the school after 18 months. Structural intervention will then be the default if the necessary improvements have not been made;
- following the introduction of Ofsted school report cards, our definition of 'stuck' schools would be 'schools which receive an attention needed rating against leadership and governance, which were graded below good - or equivalent - at their previous Ofsted inspection'. Over time, this will mean that once a school has been inspected twice under the new inspection framework it will be deemed stuck by the Department, if it has on both occasions received an attention needed rating against leadership and governance.
- Stuck schools which have not had a change of structure since their last inspection, will receive mandatory targeted intervention from a RISE team. Structural intervention will be the default if the necessary improvement is not made within two years;
- RISE teams will work across all schools providing a universal service, signposting to effective practice, and bringing schools together to share knowledge and innovation;
- in the short term, RISE teams will engage informally with some schools that have low attainment to help provide opportunities for them to learn from stronger performers. We will consult on further options for using the RISE service to address low attainment.

Intervention in schools that require special measures

We asked

- Do you agree that a school which is judged by Ofsted to require special measures should normally be subject to structural intervention?

We heard

Around half of respondents (51%) agreed that structural intervention is necessary for schools found by Ofsted to require special measures, with stronger support among parents (63%). 24% of respondents disagreed with the proposal, with the remaining 25% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, or not answering. In answer to qualitative questions regarding intervention, respondents were generally positive. Among those who agreed, common themes included the need for immediate and robust action to turn around schools which have been found by Ofsted to require special measures.

Respondents also raised the form of structural intervention. While there was broad support for strong multi-academy trusts, other forms of collaboration, such as peer support, were seen as key drivers of improvement in schools found to require special measures.

For the 24% of respondents who opposed the proposal, there were concerns about the impact of structural intervention on schools and the need to consider individual school contexts, including leadership tenure, funding issues, existing support mechanisms, and the demographics, before moving to structural intervention. Among those who supported the proposal, many emphasised that structural intervention should be the 'normal' response, and that there may be some circumstances in which it is not necessary.

In addition, respondents expressed concern about consistency of Ofsted grades and the risk of excessive inspection and monitoring in schools. Teachers and school leaders, in particular, highlighted the negative impacts of structural intervention on staff wellbeing and stability. Respondents also emphasised a need for more information about how RISE will be implemented.

Government response

We have carefully considered the range of views about intervening in schools which require support quickly.

By definition, a school found to require special measures is one where Ofsted has found that the school is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education and that the current leaders and governors do not have the leadership capacity to improve a school.

For that reason, we intend to implement the proposal that structural intervention will be the default approach for schools in this category.

We have considered respondents' views about the need to take individual school context into consideration. That is why RISE teams will assess the school's overall situation, considering Ofsted gradings and the broader context, to develop a comprehensive improvement plan that sets the school on a positive trajectory.

We will continue to communicate with staff and support them where structural intervention has been determined as the correct route for that school. The Department's Regions Group is responsible for supporting schools to deliver high-quality education for all pupils and intervening where necessary when standards fall short. Regions Group leads welfare support calls to responsible bodies following a school being found to require special measures or significant improvement, ensuring staff wellbeing is considered and signposting them to DfE-supported mental health and wellbeing resources. If a school receives intervention, this is because this approach has been deemed as the right one for the educational outcome of the pupils. We acknowledge that intervention can have an impact on staff workload and wellbeing and will continue to work with the sector to mitigate this.

Implementation of this proposal is dependent on the passage of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. Until the legislation comes into effect, the Secretary of State will continue to issue academy orders to all schools in a category of concern, and the department will progress their conversion into sponsored academies as quickly as possible.

Intervention in schools that require significant improvement

We asked

- Do you agree that, until September 2026, while we build improvement capacity, schools that require significant improvement should normally be subject to structural intervention?
- Do you agree that from September 2026, in schools that require significant improvement, targeted RISE intervention should be deployed to give the school targeted support to improve, before moving to structural intervention if necessary?

We heard

More respondents agreed (41%) than disagreed (33%) with the proposal that, until September 2026, schools found to require significant improvement should normally be subject to structural intervention. 26% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, or did not answer. 66% of respondents agreed that targeted RISE intervention should be the default for these schools following September 2026. 14% of respondents disagreed with the proposal and 20% neither agreed nor disagreed, or did not answer. In answers to qualitative questions, responses were generally positive, but there were some concerns around having an interim approach to schools in this category.

Respondents who supported the proposal for schools requiring significant improvement to 'normally' undergo structural intervention until September 2026 viewed it as a sensible, consistent and effective strategy, particularly while RISE continues to build its capacity to support more schools. However, contrasting feedback highlighted concerns that any interim approach could be unfair to schools inspected before September 2026.

Respondents highlighted the importance of empowering school leaders and adopting a school improvement approach that is collaborative and tailored to individual school contexts. They emphasised that understanding a school's circumstances is essential in determining the right support, with a clear priority placed on SEND and inclusion. There was strong support for the proposal to deploy targeted RISE interventions in schools requiring significant improvement from September 2026. Responses from unions and teachers concluded that this was the best way to improve schools over time.

A recurring theme in the responses was the urgency and speed of improvement needed for schools in this category. Teaching unions, the National Governance Association and teachers particularly highlighted concerns about off-rolling of pupils with special educational needs and the challenges of achieving meaningful, lasting change within an 18-month timeframe. Other respondents, mostly those responding as individuals, supported the proposed 18-month timeframe for improvement, provided that support was

prompt and effective. They also emphasised the importance of escalating to structural intervention if significant progress has not been achieved within that time period.

Consultation responses emphasised that the success of targeted RISE intervention will depend heavily on the quality and capacity of RISE advisors. Experienced education professionals are needed to swiftly recognise the nuances of individual schools' contexts and to deliver effective school improvement strategies. This was a sentiment held by a variety of representative groups. There were some mixed views on the role and influence of RISE advisors in relation to maintained schools, with a nervousness the policy may result in increased pressure for voluntary academisation.

Government response

We have carefully considered the views of respondents about the proposal that schools requiring significant improvement should 'normally' be subject to structural intervention while we build the capacity of RISE teams up to September 2026, with targeted RISE deployed afterwards. We are grateful for the added context provided within the responses.

Our proposals will enable a more responsive approach to school improvement, with more effective, timely and proportionate intervention where it is needed to ensure all pupils receive the high-quality education they deserve.

On balance and given the detail provided in the qualitative responses, we will proceed with our proposal that schools requiring significant improvement will normally be subject to structural intervention until September 2026, allowing time for RISE teams to develop school improvement capacity.

We have proposed that, from September 2026, schools requiring significant improvement will receive targeted RISE intervention. Where a school has not achieved the 'expected standard' in all areas at their next Ofsted inspection after 18 months, our default approach would be to structurally intervene. We welcome the support from respondents for this proposal and intend to proceed with this approach from September 2026. To do this, we intend to amend the coasting schools regulations⁴ in line with the intention set out in the consultation document so that schools that were previously in a category of concern that have identified 'needs attention' areas in the report card, are eligible for intervention.

As with special measures schools, the implementation of our proposals for schools that require significant improvement, is dependent on the passage of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

⁴ [The Coasting Schools \(England\) Regulations 2022](#)

Intervention for ‘stuck schools’

We asked

- Do you agree that following the introduction of Ofsted school report cards, we should define stuck schools as set out above?
- Do you agree with our proposed intervention approach for stuck schools and that we should amend regulations to give effect to this?

We heard

Almost half (46%) of respondents agreed with our proposal to update the definition of ‘stuck’ schools following the introduction of school report cards. This new definition would capture schools with ‘needs attention’ in leadership and governance, following a previous below Good (or equivalent) Ofsted judgement. 26% of respondents disagreed with the proposal, with 28% neither agreeing or disagreeing or not answering. A similar proportion of respondents (47%) were in favour of our proposed approach to school improvement for these schools and with amending regulations to give effect to this. 23% of respondents disagreed with the proposal, with 30% neither agreeing or disagreeing or did not answer.

Respondents who supported updating the definition of stuck schools emphasised the need to better reflect school leadership and the complexity of contextual challenges. Concerns were raised that the current definition may oversimplify underperformance and fail to distinguish between schools facing entrenched barriers and those making meaningful progress in difficult circumstances. Many called for a more nuanced, context-sensitive approach that recognises improvement trajectories and avoids labelling. Some also stressed the importance of aligning any definition with clear, supportive engagement through RISE.

The term ‘stuck’ received criticism from respondents, who felt it was unhelpful, overly negative and failed to reflect the unique context and progress of individual schools.

In relation to the proposed intervention approach for stuck schools, a common theme was a strong preference for supportive measures over structural intervention. Respondents also stressed the importance of tailoring support to each school’s context, with a focus on achieving sustainable, long-term improvements. Respondents broadly supported the targeted RISE approach for stuck schools, including the focus on collaboration and improvements within the school’s current structure.

Among those who raised concerns about the proposed approach for stuck schools, a common theme was uncertainty around the timeline and scale of improvement expected, as well as the accountability for delivering it. Some respondents specifically questioned

the threshold for a school to no longer be classified as a stuck school to avoid structural intervention. The consultation proposed that whereas a ‘needs attention’ grade for Leadership and Governance would be sufficient for a school to be defined as stuck, a school would have to improve to at least ‘expected standard’ in all assessment areas in order to no longer be defined as a stuck school. Some respondents argued against structural intervention being the default where schools were unable to achieve this within the timeframe despite engaging with targeted RISE intervention and questioned whether this would make the RISE team responsible. In contrast, others viewed the approach as a constructive signal to schools, encouraging prompt improvement without resorting to immediate structural intervention. However, concerns were raised that a two-year timeframe may be insufficient for addressing complex challenges.

Government response

We have carefully considered the views of respondents about our proposals for schools with a ‘needs attention’ grading in leadership and governance, following a previous below Good (or equivalent) by Ofsted judgement.

While some respondents expressed concern over the impact of labelling these underperforming schools, the government is clear that all children, no matter their school or background, should have the opportunity to achieve and thrive. At the end of February 2025, the 217 schools eligible for targeted RISE intervention were graded by Ofsted as below Good or equivalent for 6.6 years. Of those, 42 were below Good for more than 11 years.⁵ This means that children in these schools could go through their entire primary or secondary schooling in an underperforming school that is not giving them the high-quality education they need and deserve.

We have taken account of feedback from the sector, noting that some schools meeting this definition may have already undergone a change in responsible body and that it includes schools which may have demonstrated progress under their current leadership. We will set out in our *Support and intervention in schools* guidance how the department will have regard to schools’ specific circumstances when taking decisions about intervening in stuck schools.

When considering the definition of a stuck school, respondents were broadly supportive of including the role of strong leadership and governance as essential to achieving high standards. Based on feedback from the consultation, we will proceed with our proposal to update the definition of stuck schools to “schools which receive an ‘needs attention’ grade for leadership and governance, which were graded below good, or equivalent, at their previous Ofsted inspection.” We will continue to use the term ‘coasting schools’ where appropriate, as this is defined in legislation. We intend to amend the coasting

⁵ [Schools eligible for RISE intervention, Reporting year 2025 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

schools regulations to give effect to this proposal, so that they come into force in the autumn term, alongside the implementation of Ofsted's new framework.

There was also overall support for a more bespoke and targeted school improvement approach for stuck schools, which works to swiftly, but collaboratively, improve a school within their existing structure. The government recognises that approaches to school improvement should consider a school's situation and context, and the Department has already introduced targeted RISE intervention for schools which meet the current definition, as set out in the coasting schools regulations. This will mean that, following the introduction of the Ofsted school report card, these schools will benefit from bespoke, targeted RISE intervention.

We have proposed that stuck schools, in receipt of targeted RISE, have two years in which to achieve 'expected standard' ratings in all areas. For schools that are already stuck schools, where their most recent inspection was under the current framework, the two-year period for improvement would commence from the date Ofsted school report cards are introduced. If, after the two years, schools have not been able to significantly improve within their own structure and have not been graded as 'expected standard' in all areas, the default approach would be to structurally intervene in the school. We acknowledge the concerns of some stakeholders that the consultation proposed a high bar for improvement for a school to no longer be defined as a stuck school. We nevertheless continue to believe that this is the correct approach. It sets a clear standard for schools to meet and provides assurance that long-standing underperformance has been fully addressed.

Other schools eligible for engagement from RISE teams

We asked

- Do you agree that RISE should also engage with schools that have concerning levels of pupil attainment?
- What is the appropriate measure and approach for understanding if a school has attainment results of significant concern or shows a sharp decline in year-on-year pupil attainment, and may need external help to address these concerns?

We heard

About half (48%) of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that RISE teams should engage with schools where there are concerning levels of pupil attainment, with 22% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Respondents were generally supportive of having a route for RISE engagement in between Ofsted inspections and expressed a preference for doing this in a way that recognises the wider context of a school. For instance, respondents suggested attendance rates, levels of disadvantage, language acquisition, family involvement, and proportions of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans should be taken into account alongside attainment, when identifying schools for RISE engagement. Clear criteria are needed to define ‘concerning’ levels of attainment with apprehensions being raised over schools excluding pupils to improve data outcomes. Representative organisations, including unions and leadership and governing bodies, felt that attainment should not be the sole trigger for RISE engagement.

When developing an approach to identify schools for RISE engagement, another challenge by respondents included factors which could lead to significant year-on-year fluctuations in attainment data. Any measure and approach taken should be carefully developed to limit the impact of these factors in identifying schools for RISE engagement. Linked to this, several respondents questioned the reliability of using a single year of data, particularly in schools with small cohorts or high numbers of pupils with additional needs. Some suggested that a multi-year data sample could offer a more stable and accurate picture, helping to avoid misinterpretation due to short-term fluctuations. Progress measures, such as Progress 8 or value-added metrics, are widely supported as fairer indicators of school effectiveness.

Government response

We welcome the overall support for RISE teams identifying schools in between Ofsted inspections with concerning levels of pupil attainment and engaging with them via their responsible bodies. We will take this proposal forward.

Where schools have extremely low levels of attainment, we want to act quickly to help them turn around pupil performance.

Ofsted should remain the principal trigger for the department's accountability responses. It is, however, important that schools with the very lowest levels of pupil attainment benefit from rapid access to the kind of intensive support the department is providing through the targeted RISE programme. In those cases, we do not think it is right to wait for a change in the school's Ofsted report card to take action in schools where children are being let down.

As a first step, from autumn term 2025/26 academic year, we will begin informal engagement with some schools that have low or concerning attainment to understand more about their performance and provide opportunities for them to learn from other schools. RISE teams will meet with schools to discuss their attainment trends and agree actions, including how they will work with hubs, higher performing schools and other sources of well-evidenced support such as regional networks. We will ensure these actions are tailored to the context in which the school is operating.

In addition, we will consult this autumn on further options for using the RISE service to address low attainment. To determine eligibility, we will consult on the metrics used to identify which schools receive support. Many respondents highlighted the need for attainment data to be contextualised, with consideration also for schools where there are small class sizes and where attainment data would be more prone to fluctuations. We will ultimately seek to identify a metric that contextualises performance using prior attainment, while noting that there will be no secondary progress data in 2025/26⁶.

⁶ It is not possible to calculate Progress 8 for 2024/25 and 2025/26. This is because for these academic years, there is no KS2 prior attainment data available to use to calculate Progress 8 as primary tests and assessments were cancelled in 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to COVID-19 disruption.

Impact

Equalities

We asked

- Do you believe the proposed arrangements (any or all) would have a positive/negative impact on particular groups of learners or staff because of their protected characteristics?
- Do you have any suggestions for how any potential negative impacts on particular groups of learners or staff could be mitigated, or positive effects enhanced?

We heard

49% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that the proposals would have an impact on particular groups of learners or staff with protected characteristics. Answers to qualitative questions suggest that the framing of the question may have made it difficult for respondents to answer the question with certainty.

Concerns were raised about the collective impact of the proposals on pupils with SEND, particularly that schools with high numbers of pupils with SEND may be unfairly judged by performance data. There was concern that this could lead to schools becoming less inclusive as they may avoid admitting pupils who could negatively impact their performance data. There were also concerns around workload and impact of stress on teachers.

Some respondents highlighted that, if implemented carefully, the proposals could support pupils with protected characteristics (and others, including from disadvantaged backgrounds), with RISE teams responding quickly to the particular needs of underperforming schools.

To mitigate negative impacts, there was strong support for using contextual data when evaluating school performance, focusing on progress rather than attainment for SEND pupils, and ensuring schools reflect their communities. Respondents also called for regular reviews to ensure proposals do not disproportionately affect those with protected characteristics.

Government response

We are clear that our reformed accountability system should work for all pupils, while remaining proportionate for all teachers, and our accountability principles reflect this commitment.

School profiles are in early development. We are carrying out further user testing and will pilot a first version in the 2025/2026 academic year to ensure that it will not disproportionately impact those with protected characteristics.

Further testing may include exploring the implications of schools inputting their own data, how context might be considered alongside performance data and the presentation of data and other information on SEND. We believe that with careful testing, this will mitigate any negative impacts and promote a more inclusive approach.

Mainstream inclusion is one of the four national priorities for RISE. Our new team of expert RISE advisers will work with mainstream schools to help them become more inclusive places. The advisers include leaders from the SEND and alternative provision sectors, with a track record of improving schools. In overseeing both targeted RISE intervention and the universal service, they will ensure that support to promote inclusive practice is at the heart of what we offer.

In response to concerns about off-rolling, the government remains unequivocal: off-rolling is unacceptable in any form and must be addressed. Ofsted treats unlawful exclusions and off-rolling with utmost seriousness. These issues are reflected in inspection reports and may lead to a grading of inadequate leadership where such practices are identified. The Department has the authority to intervene when schools or trusts fail to meet their statutory responsibilities regarding admissions and exclusions. Furthermore, through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, we are enhancing our powers to take action against trusts where necessary.

Our Equality Impact Assessment can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-accountability-reform-equality-impact-assessment>

Workload and wellbeing

We asked

- What do you consider are the likely staff workload and wellbeing implications and/or burdens of the proposals in this consultation?
- Do you have any suggestions for how any potential negative impacts on workload and wellbeing could be mitigated, without negative effects on standards for children?
- What steps could be taken to help reduce or manage any burdens leading up to and during the introduction of the proposed arrangements, without negative effects on standards for children?

We heard

Respondents said that proposals must be proportionate and implemented in a supportive manner to avoid increasing teacher workload and harming wellbeing. Respondents suggested that clear guidance, clarity of expectations and sensible timelines would mitigate negative impacts.

Concerns were raised that including attainment data in school profiles could be a source of stress for teachers. Some respondents supported using technology to streamline data capture and views varied about whether schools should input data themselves.

Regarding the proposals on intervention, there was agreement that any approaches needed to be conducted in a supportive way.

Where structural intervention is needed, respondents said that clear communication and support, and extended transition periods would help mitigate the potential workload and wellbeing impacts.

There was support for RISE to be a supportive and collaborative process, with clear guidance and expectations on how the teams will work and what may be expected of the school.

Government response

We recognise that changes to the accountability system can be a source of concern for schools and teachers and are committed to ensuring that these are delivered in a way that minimises burdens on the sector and maximises the potential to improve life chances for every child.

The previous system was not working for schools, teachers or parents. Our aim is to design a better accountability system that delivers high standards for every child, while also being proportionate and considerate of the impact on workload and wellbeing. This remains an accountability principle to which we will adhere across our policies.

Regarding school profiles, we are still exploring the design and will carefully consider the behaviours they may drive. Publicly available data about test, assessment and exam results in a school or college is important for transparency and as a starting point to support parents and pupils when choosing schools or post-16 institutions. As we develop school profiles, we will be testing with school and college staff to understand implications for workload and wellbeing, including considering whether schools have a role in inputting data.

Structural intervention continues to be our default for those schools in special measures because we know it is an effective improvement measure, and no child should be left in a school that doesn't have the capacity to improve. It will also be the default for other underperforming schools which do not improve within the required timescales, from the date that Ofsted school report cards are introduced.

We have heard concerns from respondents about the role of RISE teams and the additional workload and stress this may cause. We are clear that the role of RISE is one of support and challenge; appropriate for the context and circumstances of the school. They will provide a more proportionate, effective and timely response working with school leadership and responsible bodies to collectively drive improvement. Our focus is on collaboration and improvements within the school's current structure and using Ofsted monitoring positively to help schools build their school improvement plans.

Our consultation response takes account of recommendations from Sinead McBrearty's independent report on the workload and wellbeing implications of the inspection reforms, which Ofsted commissioned⁷. As set out in chapter 1, policy and reform of accountability will be grounded by a set of principles. Those principles received broad support from respondents to the consultation, and include that accountability should be proportionate, taking account of the impact on workload and the wellbeing of leaders, teachers and staff. The changes to our approach to intervention and school improvement outlined in chapter 3 of this response will see a more tailored and proportionate approach to intervention and better support for school leaders. The Department's Regions Group will continue to carry out welfare support calls to responsible bodies following a school being found to require special measures or significant improvement. As part of these, officials will remind responsible bodies of the range of support available to them. Regions Group

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-the-way-ofsted-inspects-education>

will also ensure that officials receive regular training to support them in carrying out these activities consistently and effectively.

Alongside our accountability reforms, we are working to improve how we promote universal wellbeing interventions for the workforce. We recently issued and promoted updated resources on our 'Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff' service, developed alongside school leaders. The service contains a range of supportive resources for schools to review and adapt to improve staff wellbeing. We will continue to work with school leaders to improve and expand this service.

One of our approaches to personal support for leaders is professional supervision, a form of mental health and wellbeing support delivered by the charity Education Support and funded by the department. The programme provides school and college leaders with an opportunity to discuss and process challenges they are experiencing at work. We continually work with Education Support to improve the delivery of the programme, its reach and how it is targeted, as well as with the Supervision in Education Network to promote the benefits of supervision for leaders.

Our education staff wellbeing charter is an important universal set of commitments and resources for staff across the sector, with 4,100 schools and colleges currently signed up. We are working with the sector to update the charter to improve how it supports school leaders to remove workload and wellbeing barriers, develop supportive wellbeing cultures, and retain the best staff.

We will work with the Improving Education Together (IET) partnership to explore further opportunities to support headteachers, particularly in the context of inspection visits and outcomes.

Annex A: Updated School Accountability System roles and responsibilities

	Better information about strengths and areas for improvement	Spreading effective practice and increasing collaboration	Intervening to ensure improvement where needed
Responsible body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure high quality provision and outcomes for pupils. This includes responding to school report card findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work collaboratively, sharing effective practice and learning from other schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage positively with RISE team support and intervention
Ofsted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation areas and scale mean schools are inspected and assessed on the component parts of great education provision, in a more precise and nuanced way School report cards provide better information on school performance for parents, leaders and government Monitoring schools in a category of concern provides assurance about progress and identifies where insufficient progress is made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation recognises and incentivises schools to share best practice through the exemplary rating School report cards identify/advertise great practice which can be drawn upon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ofsted report card, and approach to monitoring, clearly identifies underperforming schools, and specifically identifies schools that are causing concern

	Better information about strengths and areas for improvement	Spreading effective practice and increasing collaboration	Intervening to ensure improvement where needed
DfE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School profiles hold schools to account for their results by publishing them and informing the public about how the education system is performing [New] • School profiles provide up-to-date information in an accessible and helpful way for parents [New] • The sector facing service will give school leaders, staff and responsible bodies granular insights to support improvement [New] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RISE teams signpost schools to great practice, as identified in Ofsted report cards • RISE teams encourage/direct sharing of good practice where improvement is required • RISE teams support the formation of strong groups of schools • The sector facing service will provide information to enable collaboration, highlighting areas of excellence and identifying areas for improvement [New] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural intervention as default for schools in special measures • Until September 2026 - Structural intervention as default for schools that require significant improvement. • From September 2026 - Targeted RISE intervention for schools that require significant improvement (i.e. that have capacity to improve). Structural intervention by default if improvement not secured after 18 months • Targeted RISE intervention for 'stuck' schools that haven't had structural change since their last inspection. Structural intervention by default for all 'stuck' schools if improvement not secured within 2 years



Department
for Education

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